National Park
Reserve

NAHANNI

Service Plan

Acknowledgements

This plan was produced by Steve Catto, Nahanni Park Warden and Michael Cobus, PNRO Visitor Activities Specialist. Steve Langdon, the Park Superintendent, took a direct interest in the development of the plan and ensured that it was completed by allocating a significant proportion of his staff resources to it.

Per Nilsen, PHQ Planning and Evaluation Specialist provided many helpful comments and revision suggestions throughout the process. Lianne Roberts, PNRO Service Planner, helped with the tedious but essential final organizing and editing thereby producing a better, clearer document.

Approval Minute
Nahanni National Park
Service Plan

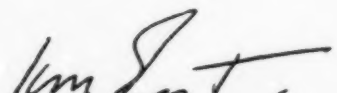
This service plan provides the park with guidance regarding priorities for development and direction for programming. It defines a capital development program and an O&M program of activities that will meet marketing and public awareness objectives of the park, improve the visitor reception function, and upgrade services for day-users and highway travellers. It will also initiate a more rigorous system of managing river use, better prepare all visitors by improving regional signage and information distribution, improve community relations through expanded outreach programming, and more thoroughly interpret nationally significant park themes. The plan also reflects our growing concern with the provision of services to disabled people and strengthening stakeholder partnerships.

This program of work is hereby approved in principle. Class "D" estimates are provided for all proposals. Financial approval for all recommendations will be determined in the multi-year operational plan. While the rate of implementation may change from that proposed here, the direction will remain steady.

The plan should be considered as a basic measure of the effectiveness of the program. It should relate directly to the functional review and work plans of the site. Annual updates of the plan will be made in working copies only at PNRO Visitor Activities, PNRO library and the park headquarters.

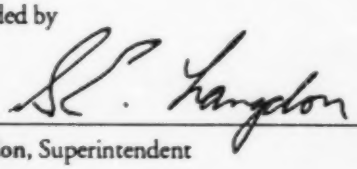
The plan is a comprehensive set of guidelines that should remain responsive to changes in departmental resourcing capabilities, unexpected changes in public use and attitude trends and potential longer term changes in strategic management as may be presented to the park by land claims settlement, new departmental goals and the growth of a global perspective on the mandate of the park service.

Recommended by



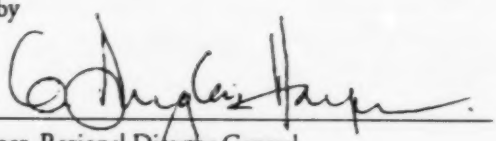
Ken East, Director, Operations

Recommended by



Steve Langdon, Superintendent

Approved by



W.D. Harper, Regional Director General

91-06657/

NAHANNI NATIONAL PARK

Service Plan

Table of Contents

Approval Minute 3
Introduction 5
Executive Summary 7
Situation Analysis Overview 10
- Current Park Offer 10
- Market Segmentation 11
- Stakeholders 11

Summary of Nahanni's Major Strengths and Weaknesses 13
Future Service Offer 16
- Market Position 16
- Service Strategies 19
  - Awareness Information Strategy 19
  - Pre-trip Information Strategy 20
  - Enroute Service Strategy 21
  - Reception Service Strategy 22
  - Heritage Theme Presentation Strategy 23
  - Recreational Opportunities Strategy 24
  - Support Service Strategy 26
  - Departure Service Strategy 27
  - Resource Protection Strategy 27
  - Public Safety Strategy 28
  - Regional Integration Strategy 29
  - Socio-economic Information Strategy 29
  - Access for Disabled Persons Strategy 30

Implementation Strategy 31
Capital Project Spreadsheet 34
Recommendations to the Management Plan Review Team 35

Introduction

This park service plan:

Provides objectives and defines basic levels of service for interpretation, visitor services and public safety in the park

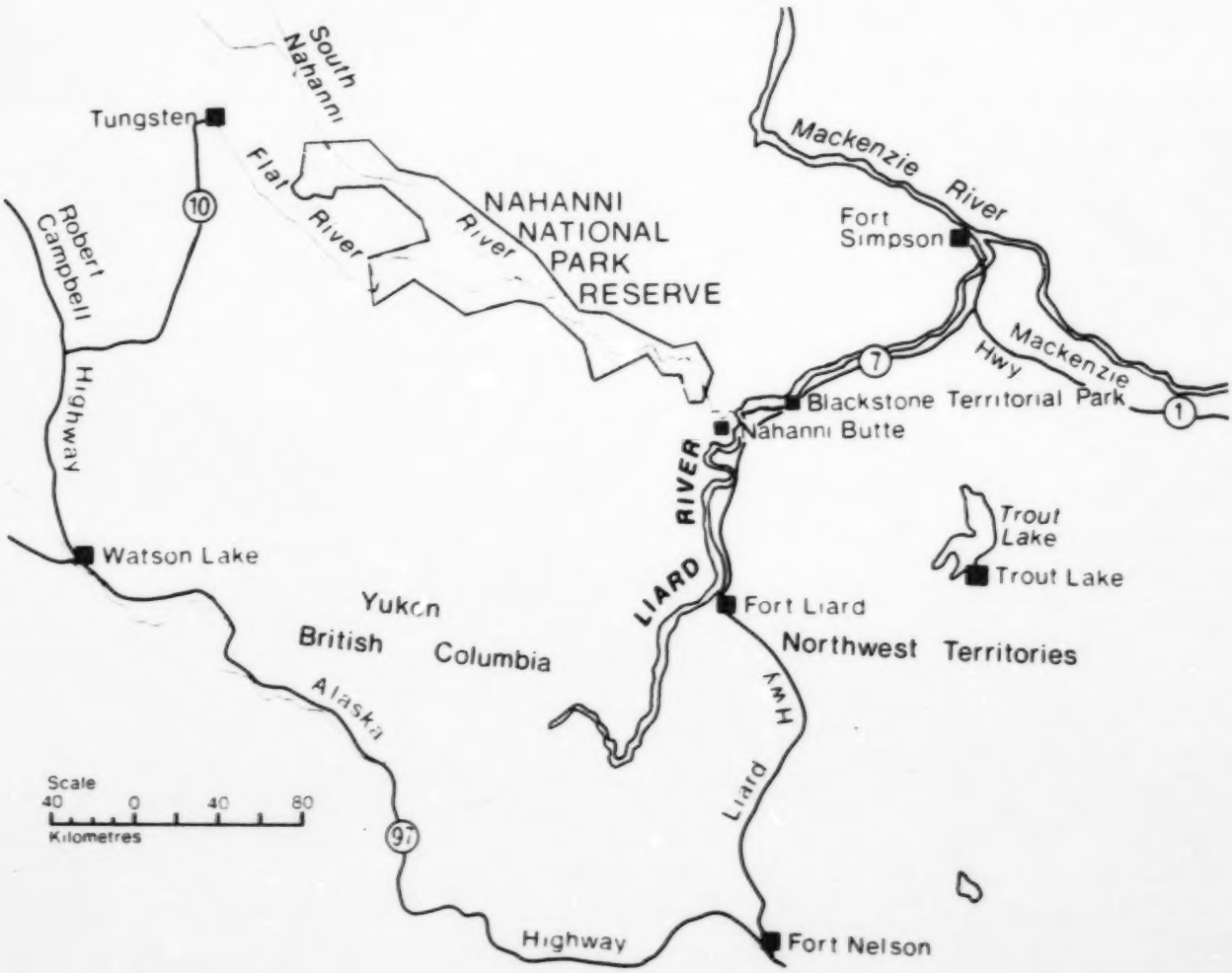
Defines strategies for the delivery of services to each of the four visitor activities groups regarding Awareness, Pre-trip, Enroute,Reception, Heritage Theme Presentation, Recreational Opportunities, Support Services, Departure, Resource Protection, Public Safety, Regional Integration, Socio-economic Information and Access for Disabled Persons.

Provides operational details for the O&M and capital project work required to implement those strategies

Defines an implementation strategy that covers five fiscal years

Sets baseline operational standards in many areas against which functional performance can be monitored to judge the effectiveness of Nahanni's service to the public.

Regional Setting of Park



Planning Principles

This service plan is based upon the planning principles of the approved park management plan and several core operational considerations as follows:

Maintenance of the wilderness river character of the park is the paramount factor to be considered in all park planning and development. Resource protection measures and visitor activity proposals must all be measured against the standard of how well they contribute to that over-riding goal.

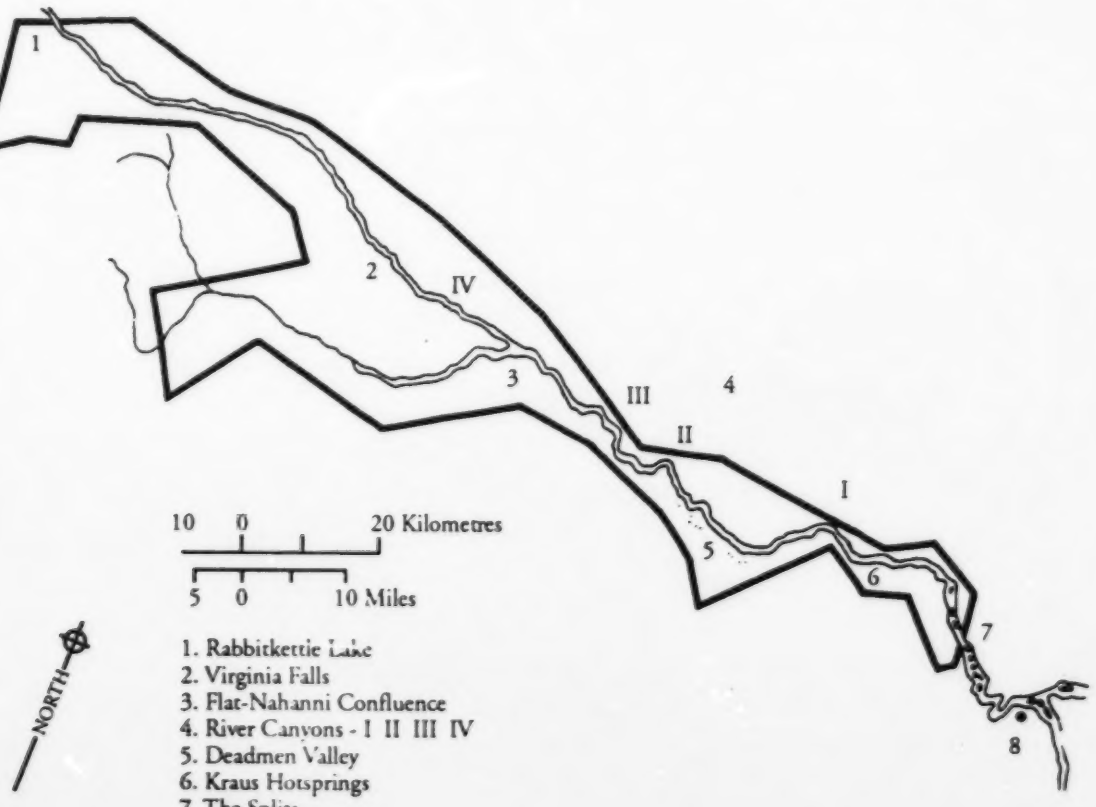
Maintenance of the World Heritage Area and Canadian Heritage River characteristics of the park is an essential planning requirement.

Regional integration and the consideration of local attitudes and needs is essential to the success of park management strategies.

Expressing and **supporting the marketing relationship** between the park and its customers – the visitor activity groups – in both philosophical approach and in the provision of services and facilities is an essential element of this service plan.

A key planning principle is to ensure that it becomes practical to **monitor and manage the flow of visitors** down the river with regard to evolving optimal use levels, operational and maintenance guidelines for primitive campgrounds and providing essential information without detracting from the sense of discovery and adventure in the experience.

Location of Park Facilities and Major Features



1. Rabbitkettie Lake
2. Virginia Falls
3. Flat-Nahanni Confluence
4. River Canyons - I II III IV
5. Deadmen Valley
6. Kraus Hotsprings
7. The Splits
8. Nahanni Butte

Executive Summary

This service plan covers visitor service and interpretation requirements and some aspects of public safety concerns for Nahanni. It is driven by a visitor segmentation and needs analysis that is organized by the stages of a typical visit to the park; becoming aware of the existence of the park (Awareness Services), planning a trip to the park (Pre-trip Services), travelling to the park (Enroute Services), initial contact with the park (Reception Services), activities enjoyed in the park (Heritage Presentation, Recreation and Support Services) and returning home (Departure Services). In addition, Safety and Resource Protection needs, services for Disabled Persons and Regional Integration, Socio-economic Information needs and Stakeholder factors relevant to visitor activities were also analysed.

The Visitor Segmentation defined four visitor activity groups,

1. River Trippers
2. Day-users
3. Highway Travellers
4. Local Residents

The analysis resulted in a comprehensive and detailed list of program strengths and weaknesses.

The strengths of Nahanni are many. Its reputation based upon its superlative natural and historical qualities and its status as a World Heritage Area and Canadian Heritage River ensures its attraction power. There is a high degree of personal contact between visitors and park staff but visitors are still permitted the autonomy and self-sufficiency befitting a true wilderness experience. The park has good working relationships with most of the many significant stakeholders in the park and the park offers the opportunity for an exceptional day-use experience at Virginia Falls for people who cannot travel down the river.

The weaknesses of Nahanni were defined as ten major service issues as follows:

1. Awareness

The park lacks an overall strategy for generating greater awareness of the park in order to strengthen the trip planning phase of all Nahanni visitors' experience and support the park's marketing intentions.

2. Reception

The visitor reception function of the park is inadequate. A complete overhaul of the reception facility and services in Fort Simpson and an unobtrusive, small-scale reception exhibit for Virginia Falls are both required.

3. Day-users

Day-users are a neglected visitor activity group at present. They are not provided with an appropriate level of service in each of the pre-trip, enroute, reception, park activities and departure phases of their Nahanni experience.

4. Managing Primitive Camping

The park must address the issue of unplanned use of some undesignated campsites by river trippers and numerous related concerns to ensure that the level of services matches the level of use. Management prescriptions should be drawn up for each setting based upon the concept of Limits of Acceptable Change.

5. Highway Travellers

Highway travellers require better awareness information, enroute signage and reception centre interpretation to enhance their limited, off-site Nahanni experience

6. Regional Integration

A regional integration effort is required to establish clear understanding between Nahanni Butte, the GNWT operation at Blackstone, the community of Fort Simpson and the park to clarify the role each will play in providing services to Nahanni and other regional visitors in order to minimize duplication, conflicts and inefficiencies.

7. Outreach

A community outreach program is required to improve the local image of the park and build better relations with the park's neighbours.

8. Interpretation and Communications

The interpretation themes and strategic and management messages for the park are not being interpreted in a comprehensive manner to park visitors or any segments of the general public.

9. Stakeholders

The park has no overall stakeholder communication strategy to ensure continuing and effective exchange of information with stakeholders for mutual benefits.

10. Socio-economic Information

There are significant information gaps regarding day-use and other park visitor activities.

Action Strategies

The following ten basic strategies for resolving the weaknesses contain most of the 78 action requirements defined in the plan.

1. **Awareness level media and programming** will be upgraded by improving relations with print and television media, standardising information distributed to potential visitors for awareness and trip planning purposes and investigating the possibility of producing a video on Nahanni and an IMAX film on national parks that includes Nahanni.

2. **Personal programming** will be conducted for local interest groups throughout the year to improve the image of the park and increase their understanding of its purpose.

3. **The existing office will be renovated** to create a small, dynamic VRC in Fort Simpson with flexible programs and exhibits for local residents and visitors.

4. The park will **increase the general awareness of day-use opportunities** and improve day-use interpretation and reception support services.

5. The park will **strengthen the sign plan** proposals for en-route and reception signs and develop a joint plan with the GNWT based upon a memorandum of understanding to provide better regional highway signage and interpretive pull-offs.

6. The park will ensure that **regional tourism information kiosks represent Nahanni.**

7. **Personal reception services** provided for visitors at Fort Simpson and Rabbitkettle Lake will be strengthened through staff training. Signage and low-key non-personal reception services at Virginia Falls will be developed.

8. The park will greatly **improve the presentation of the four interpretation themes** and strategic and management messages to park visitors in the VRC in Fort Simpson, an area guide to Virginia Falls, re-writing the river guide and developing kiosk exhibits in the park.

9. All locations along the river receiving significant camping pressure will have **management prescriptions prepared** for them and Limits of Acceptable Change established within which future monitoring of impact on the sites will occur.

10. The park will **support GNWT and business initiatives** in regional communities in the area of tourism activities that relate to the park through the development of memoranda of understanding on subjects such as the development of information centres and tourist support services.

Planning Context

The Nahanni management plan was approved in 1987 and is due to be reviewed in 1992. It provides comprehensive policy and management direction for this service plan. All aspects of this plan are consistent with the management plan. Service weaknesses that may require significant changes in the management scenario for the park are identified here for future consideration by the management plan review team.

Recommendations to the Management Plan Review Team

1. The need to devise a management scenario for the mix of day-use, river tripping, associated camping, incidents of fly-in overnight camping and consequent air traffic is perhaps the single most significant visitor activity challenge which must be undertaken within the context of reviewing the management plan. An assessment must be made of the need for day-use quotas, group size limitations and regulation of arrival-departure scheduling of outfitters. Virginia Falls highlights the need for a management model for all aspects of river use which can be used for testing peak loading scenarios, scheduling and other parameters of use.
2. Air traffic over the park whether it be visitor transport charters or day-use flightseeing can have a strongly determining affect on the quality of a river-tripper's wilderness experience. The plan review team should propose a stronger strategy for working with Transport Canada to control air activities over the park.
3. All analysis of new visitor activity groups, their attendant service and marketing implications will be deferred to the management plan review team
4. Visitor data on day-users and highway travellers should be examined for adequacy and the need for further analysis of existing raw data on river trippers assessed.
5. The implications of the role of wardens as regional information sources particularly with regard to the Nahanni river beyond the park boundary should be assessed relative to training and the park information strategy.
6. The potential for day-use at Rabbitkettle Lake should be assessed.
7. The current park management plan does not provide for visitor activities staff at Nahanni. This service plan identifies numerous essential tasks which cannot be carried out without person-year resources dedicated to this function. The plan review should assess this need.

Implementation Costs

Previous Estimates

The 1987 management plan recommended that the following total capital resources would be required to implement the visitor activity components of its implementation strategy:

Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
88/89	89/90	90/91	91/92	92/93
98.0	431.0	127.0	64.0	150.0

Major projects were:

Virginia Falls Redevelopment	431.0
Trail Development	78.0
Park Film	185..0
River Guidebook	75.0
Edu-kit	50.0
Fort Simpson Exhibit	30.0
Campground Improvements	11.0
Total	**860.0**

Of these projects to date, 1990, only the Virginia Falls redevelopment has been undertaken. The dollar and person-year implications of the management plan defined a program approved with the management plan in principle only.

Current Estimates

Of the 78 implementation action requirements in the implementation strategy of this service plan, 40 can be carried out using O&M resources. Many of these are scheduled in the first years of the life of the plan and may be accomplished using existing resources. Thirty-eight of the action requirements will require capital funding. These are rolled up into 14 capital projects. Most of these projects are in the later years of the schedule. (Year 3 and 4, 1992/93 and future years). Some projects such as the on-going camping pressure study may or may not require future capital resources. The costs for this service plan are as follows:

Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Future Years
90/91	91/92	92/93	93/94	94/95+
15.0	100.0	94.0	290.0	170.0

The major capital projects are:

Admin/VRC Redevelopment	
Exhibits	90.0
A.V. Program	60.0
Picnic Area	6.0
Project Design	15.0
Upgrade Two Kiosks	15.0
Redevelop River Guide	40.0
Virginia Falls Self-guiding Brochure	30.0
Virginia Falls Day-use Information	20.0
Portable Exhibit	15.0
Promotional Video	60.0
Edu-kit	25.0
Poster Series	20.0
Remote Weather Station	20.0
Regional Signage	35.0
Outreach Programming (PSA, Commercials etc.)	5.0
Trail development	60.0
Regional Information Centres	
Yellowknife	100.0
Fort Liard	15.0
Fort Simpson	15.0
NWT-Alta Border	15.0
Park Signs (includes portage markers)	14.0
IMAX (Not estimable at present)	
Grand Total	**675.0**

Person Year Resources

The plan identifies the need for person-year resources dedicated to the visitor activities function. To date, park warden staff have carried out some essential visitor activities requirements but any enhancement of the existing minimal and ad hoc program will require a visitor activities position to be defined on the park organisation chart. The size and nature of the position will be a function of the rate of implementation of the program defined in this plan. The implementation strategy will require a total of .8 P.Y. for capital projects and O&M items exclusive of overhead and administration time requirements. The rate of implementation now defined in the plan would require a full person-year for the life of the plan. This suggests that the park should be provided with a visitor activities officer to carry out the implementation.

Long-term Future Resource Needs

The IMAX proposal is not costed out here as it may be regional or national in scope and may or may not relate specifically to Nahanni's capital program. The only other item that cannot be costed at this time is future work that may be called for as a result of the Limits of Acceptable change exercise. It is envisioned that most near term work on primitive river campsites will be O&M in nature and non-urgent. Capital resources to replace primitive site facilities, firepits and privies will be required.

Longevity of the Plan

The plan defines an implementation strategy for 90/91, 91/92, 92/93 and 93/94. It is intended to provide thorough input into the upcoming management plan review after which it should be amended to comply with the revised management plan.

Situation Analysis Overview

A comprehensive data base was compiled during the course of carrying out the rigorous analyses required by the Visitor Activities Management Process for the development of service plans. It contains a profiling of visitor activity groups, a lengthy list of the strengths and weaknesses of the park and a documentation of the current offer of services of the park. This material is available as background to this plan in the park or in the Visitor Activities section of the regional office. An overview of it follows here.

The Nahanni Experience

Nahanni National Park has a reputation amongst river runners as being one of the ultimate river adventures in Canada. For canoeists and rafters, the prime motivation for a trip to the park is to personally confront the Nahanni mystique. The legends of lost gold and haunted valleys and its remoteness combine with its stunning physical features to lure people to their once-in-a-lifetime experience on this wilderness river.

The whitewater and currents are challenging but not so difficult as to prevent moderately capable canoeists from descending the river. Associated experiences such as bush-plane access, the long days of summer in the subarctic, wildlife and native cultural activities in local communities augment the central experience. Visitors who can only fly in to Virginia Falls for a short day visit will get a taste of the character of Nahanni.

People who live in regional communities or who drive the regional highways do not have the opportunity of visiting Nahanni directly but they are still motivated by the sense of pioneer adventure and freedom still evident in this sub-arctic region of Canada. The Nahanni exemplifies those qualities for them.

Current Park Offer

1. Awareness and Pre-trip Information

Very little specific awareness-level programming occurs. Visitors learn of the park by word-of-mouth, advertising by commercial operators at trade shows and through print media and through media presentations of films and magazine articles produced by private-sector authors and film-makers. The park responds to all mail requests for information with a trip-planning package of information consisting of an assortment of pamphlets and a photo-copied typescript of specific information on visiting Nahanni including logistics and safety messages.

2. Reception and Registration Services

The park office and visitor reception centre are located in Fort Simpson, the major take-off point for flights into the park. There are exhibits, films and A.V. programs and reception, information and registration services provided there for visitors. Park wardens also greet and register visitors at Rabbitkettle Lake. De-registration occurs at the Nahanni Butte warden station.

3. Interpretation and Information

The park management plan defines the four interpretation themes for the park as follows:

a) Formation and Geomorphology of the South Nahanni River Corridor
b) Ecology of the Mackenzie Mountains
c) Human Heritage of the Nahanni Wilderness
d) The Meaning and Management of Wilderness.

The Fort Simpson VRC with its exhibits, reception staff and audio-visual resources is the main source of interpretation and information for visitors. Park wardens at Rabbitkettle Lake provide a guided tour to the nearby hotsprings. Wardens patrol the river by canoe and jet boat offering advice, information and aid to river travellers when required. There are no on-site interpretation facilities or exhibits within the park boundary. Four small kiosks contain some mimeographed sheets of information and brochures. A river guide brochure provides on-site interpretation and information for visitors. Extension programming occurs to a very limited degree and there are minor exhibits in a few other locations such as the Alberta/NWT boundary.

4. Access and Circulation

There is no road access to the park and no roads to the park will be constructed. Visitors must arrange for a charter aircraft to take them into the park or use non-motorized watercraft to descend tributary rivers that eventually lead them to the Nahanni. All circulation within the park is by non-motorized watercraft. Landing sites are designated at Rabbitkettle Lake and on the South Nahanni River immediately above Virginia Falls. Visitors can arrange to have air charters land at other sites upstream of the park. Visitors usually arrange beforehand to be picked up at Nahanni Butte or the Blackstone Territorial Park by air charter upon completion of their trip through the park.

5. Recreational Activities

Within the park, the Nahanni and Flat Rivers have been designated for non-motorized use only. All river trippers use either canoes, kayaks or rafts to descend the river. Local native people pursue their traditional resource harvesting activities in the park using motorized boats.

Although no trails have been designated as such, hiking in the backcountry off-river is encouraged.

6. Support Services

There are two designated campgrounds in the park; Rabbitkettle Lake and Virginia Falls. They both have sources of potable water, earthpit privies, food caches, picnic tables and fire rings. No trace camping in undesignated locations is encouraged along river reaches not serviced by designated campgrounds. The park has constructed portages around Virginia Falls and other major rapids and between Rabbitkettle Lake and the Nahanni.

Market Segmentation

***River Trippers** are either canoeists or rafters and are either travelling independently or are guided and outfitted by private operators. About 500 per year descend the river each taking about 12 days to do so.*

About 325 of the 500 river trippers per season are independent canoeists who descend the river without the services of a commercial guide. They require previous experience with white-water canoeing techniques and good information on the level of difficulty of sections of the river. They require experience in wilderness, low-impact camping and self-reliance in isolated settings.

About 100 of them are guided canoeists who descend the river with the services of a commercial guide. About 75 of the 500 river trippers per season are guided rafters who choose to visit Nahanni with the services of a commercial rafting guide. They pay more for their trip per diem than do guided canoeists. They enjoy gourmet meals prepared by guide staff and their equipment is carried over portages for them.

Day-users charter a plane and fly in to Virginia Falls from a number of regional communities. About 500 per year spend 2 to 3 hours each at the focal point of the park.

Day-users are motivated by the excitement of travel in a bush plane, and a brief but intense experience with the focal point of the park, Virginia Falls. They lack the ability, time or inclination to complete a river trip in the park but can spend several hours enjoying the spectacular scenery and having a picnic on a promontory overlooking the falls. About 350 to 500 day visitors fly in to the falls each summer. However, this is the fastest growing segment of the Nahanni visitation.

***Local Residents** have varying degrees of cultural, economic and recreational involvement with the park and may be significantly affected by park management strategies.*

Local residents are not strongly motivated to visit the park. The cost is prohibitive for casual visits and most holidays are taken in southern locations. Relatively transient local residents in the middle to upper income who may only be planning on staying in the north for a few years are more likely to venture to the falls than are long term residents who are mainly Dene in descent. The Dene of Nahanni Butte and to a lesser extent Fort Liard use the park for traditional purposes. Virginia Falls is viewed by some local residents as a destination for visiting friends and family members.

Nahanni Butte: About 90 people almost all of Dene descent.
Fort Simpson: About 1000 people half of Dene descent.
Fort Liard: About 400people almost all of Dene descent.

***Highway Travellers** visit the park office and visitor reception centre in Fort Simpson and view the Mackenzie Mountains from the Liard Highway but they do not actually enter the park.*

Independent highway travellers or members of bus tours drive north on the Mackenzie Highway to experience the near-north in an inexpensive, self-sufficient and familiar manner. They are expecting to see and feel something of the sense of adventure, discovery and excitement of going north to the relatively unknown landscapes and cultural settings of the sub-arctic. Some of them may decide to charter a plane and fly into Virginia Falls for a day visit.

Stakeholders

Stakeholders are identified here and their relationship with the park briefly described. They are ranked according to their level of involvement with the park.

Commercial Outfitters

In 1989, commercial outfitters accounted for 275 of 535 river trippers registered for overnight trips in the park, 52% of all overnight users.

They wish to be informed well in advance of any changes to the rules concerning the licensing of their guides, and to be more involved in the park management process in order to make their

concerns known. They also wish to respond to trends towards older clients which may be reflected in a subsequent increase in the percentage of rafting tours on the river.

The park wishes to assess the possibility of self-regulation amongst outfitters to have them co-ordinate trips with each other to better schedule their time on the river and allow for as much solitude for their clients as possible. The park wants to ensure that all guides are properly advised of safety procedures, provide advertising space for outfitters in Nahanni's information package, assess the possibility of creating reserved camping areas for outfitters and monitor the camping activity of the outfitters to determine the degree of impact upon specific camping locations.

Aircraft Charter Companies

In 1989, nine companies were issued landing permits. The park has good control over flights originating from Fort Simpson but flights originate from other locations and are more difficult to control. The number of flights into Nahanni has increased substantially in recent years especially for day-use charters to Virginia Falls. In 1989, this accounted for half of all visits.

The charter companies wish to use the park information package as an advertising vehicle, establish fuel caches in the park and be involved in relevant park management decisions. Park concerns include the need to manage the increases in floatplane landings at the falls with regard to public safety and the impact of planes on the wilderness experience of river trippers and maintaining good communications with charter companies to control the height and corridors of overflights. The park also perceives the need to issue park radio frequencies to all operators and establish remote weather stations in the park to provide current weather information to charter companies.

Government of the Northwest Territories

The park's mandate relates to those of the GNWT Departments of Economic Development and Tourism and Renewable Resources. The park concerns are to develop joint GNWT/CPS maintenance and interpretation facilities at Blackstone Territorial Park, to communicate with ED&T regarding relevant business initiatives in the region and to provide training for those staff members who are funded by ED & T. The park also wants to maintain liason with Renewable Resources to exchange information on native harvesting, outfitters of recreational hunting and the transportation of problem bears out of Nahanni onto GNWT lands The GNWT wishes to promote the Big River tourist area, develop marketing strategies for the region and maintain the joint CPS/GNWT fire suppression agreement.

Nahanni Butte Band Council

Residents of Nahanni Butte are very concerned that the park maintain a presence in the village. Since the relocation of the operations centre to Fort Simpson, there has been the perception that the park may be abandoning Nahanni Butte and that future employment opportunities for village residents will diminish. The park concerns are to provide interpretive services at the Nahanni Butte elementary school, to support relevant business interests at Nahanni Butte, to assess the implications of the future native land claims and to continue to provide employment for local hire seasonal labourers on an annual basis.

Local residents wish to maintain their right of access to the park for hunting and trapping privileges.

Mackenzie Times

The Mackenzie Times, a local regional newspaper, wishes to receive interpretive articles on the park. The park will assign at least one article to be written by each warden, annually.

Fort Simpson Information Bureau

When completed, the information bureau operated by the town council of Fort Simpson will be one of the first buildings visitors see when they arrive in town. The park will display the corporate logo of Nahanni and an orientation map there.

North Nahanni Expediting

This local business venture wishes to provide ground transportation between Blackstone and Fort Simpson during the summer. The operator relies on the park to advertise his service by word-of-mouth. The park will support the operation by assisting communications between Fort Simpson and Nahanni Butte.

Nahanni Inn

The Nahanni Inn is the largest hotel in Fort Simpson and is the only one capable of catering to groups of visitors such as bus tours. In the past, the managers of the hotel have borrowed VHS format video tapes from the park to show to hotel guests. If demand warrants, the park will provide the hotel with permanent copies of several of the park's interpretive videos.

Fort Liard Band Council

The park will seek to produce interpretive displays jointly with the GNWT for the Fort Liard visitor information centre now under construction. Fort Liard wishes more economic spin-offs and greater involvement in the management process, local canoe guide trained by park wardens and increases in the numbers of day-users flying into the park from Fort Liard.

Summary of Nahanni's Major Strengths and Weaknesses

Strengths

Nahanni's reputation ensures its attraction power. Its canyons, hotsprings, Canada's highest major waterfalls and the mystery surrounding early explorers and prospectors combine to create an exceptional and unique river landscape. It has been designated both a World Heritage Area and a Canadian Heritage River.

Almost all river trippers to the park write for information before arriving. The pre-trip information distribution to river trippers is fairly complete.

A high proportion of river trippers who fly into the park are received personally by a member of the park staff.

River trippers are permitted to find their own campsites along most of the length of the river thereby strengthening their degree of autonomy, freedom and self-sufficiency as befits a wilderness experience. Potential camping locations are numerous. Well motivated visitors and guides keep campsites clean. Driftwood supplies campsites with firewood naturally.

The personally conducted hikes to the hotsprings allow visitors to gain immediate access to that extremely fragile feature.

Visitors are provided with an added level of security by warden staff patrolling the river and the fact that the park radio communication system is accessible to them.

The day-use experience at the falls enables people who cannot spend the time to run the river to see the most magnificent feature of the park.

Most charter companies and outfitters integrate their operations with that of the park. Regional air charter service is well-developed and the park has a good working relationship with outfitters.

Weaknesses

There are ten service issues for Nahanni which include all important weaknesses in the current offer.

1.The park lacks an overall strategy for generating greater awareness of the park in order to strengthen the trip planning phase of all Nahanni visitors' experience and support the park's marketing objectives.

Some visitors arrive at the park office without adequate awareness level information about the park. Emphasis on river trippers has left a gap in the awareness information delivery program for day-users and highway travellers. The content of the main park brochure is of low quality.

There is only an ad hoc relationship with partners who generate awareness. The park should prepare articles for appropriate media outlets such as the Mackenzie Times.

The park has no overall strategy for increasing awareness of the park in keeping with its marketing objectives.

Awareness information may not be presenting enough information on the wilderness, limited-access aspects of the park and too much information on the availability of services and access modes.

Improvements are required in the extension effort of the park in local communities. Community outreach efforts are constrained by a lack of person-years.

The pre-trip package was constructed in a piece-meal manner over a number of years and requires an over-haul to upgrade its quality and update the information it contains.

Some day-users will arrive in the park without having contacted any CPS staff or facility.

There is no trip planning information for day-users

2. The visitor reception function of the park is inadequate. A complete overhaul of the reception facility and services in Fort Simpson and an unobtrusive, small-scale reception exhibit for Virginia Falls are both required.

The visitor reception function in Fort Simpson is below CPS standards. Media and reception staff require upgrading

The lack of visitor activities staff in the park means that visitor reception and service is uncoordinated and ad hoc.

Staff located at Rabbitkettle must be chosen and trained carefully as there is a wide variety of responsibilities required of that person and he or she may be the first and only park employee contacted by visitors.

Reception services at Virginia Falls are virtually non-existent

Redevelopment of Virginia Falls will improve facilities there but the continuing lack of information, signage, reception and interpretation is a weakness.

3. Day-users are a neglected visitor activity group at present. They are not provided with an appropriate level of service in each of the pre-trip, enroute, reception, park activities and departure phases of their Nahanni experience.

On-site interpretation information at Virginia Falls is required in some format. Day-visitors, even though they are half of the park attendance do not have the same level of service and consideration as river trippers. There is the potential for sponsorship by the charter companies of some form of on-site interpretation especially if it were a publication or area guide.

There is a potential conflict between day-users and river-trippers at the falls. The path from the dock to the falls passes by the campground used by river trippers.

CPS will need to get pilots to help manage people during day-visits in part because of the age and limited physical capabilities of some of their customers. For example, they will have to help ensure that litter bags are used and that there is enough time for visitors to picnic at the falls if they choose to do so.

The ferrying in and out of overnight campers into the falls will become a management issue when they increase in number.

The air space above the falls, taxiing on the river, canoes approaching and leaving the dock suggest that safety considerations will increase in importance as day-use increases at the falls.

4. The park must address the issue of unplanned use of some undesignated campsites by river trippers and numerous related concerns to ensure that the level of services provided meets the level of use. Management prescriptions should be drawn up for each setting based upon the concept of Limits of Acceptable change.

Camping and hiking activity at Virginia Falls has led to levels of impact that brought on a redevelopment project now in progress and scheduled for completion in 1992 .

Camping levels at Rabbitkettle Lake have resulted in a gradual incremental expansion of the camping area at the lake beyond that originally contemplated.

Dispersed camping at locations such as Flood Creek and Hell-roaring Creek do not have baseline monitoring criteria for future measures of levels of change.

The Marengo creek site is rarely used.

The Pulpit Rock campsite is used consistently by most river trippers but does not have a privy or other minimal facilities. It is undesignated.

The Big bend site is located in prime bear habitat.

The Deadmen valley site has evolved into the equivalent of an designated camping site even though not defined as such in the park management plan.

5. Highway travellers require better awareness information, enroute signage and reception centre interpretation to enhance their limited, off-site Nahanni experience.

A new information facility is under construction in Fort Liard and provides the opportunity for the park to gain a presence there.

The NWT kiosk on the Mackenzie Highway is scheduled for renovation in the near future and provides an opportunity to improve our information distribution there.

An interpretive development plan for the Liard Highway has identified the need to the GNWT for the development of an information kiosk in Fort Nelson. CPS could take advantage of such a development to install interpretation exhibits there.

A CPS-GNWT integrated highway sign program for the region could strengthen the image of the park within its regional context.

Some visitors arrive at the park office without adequate awareness level information about the park. Emphasis on river trippers has left a gap in the awareness information delivery program for day-users and highway travellers.

The park should consider providing copies of park video programs to the Nahanni Inn if demand warrants.

The park should take advantage of the opportunity to present information about Nahanni in the Fort Simpson Information Bureau.

6. A regional integration effort is required to establish clear understanding between Nahanni Butte, the GNWT operation at Blackstone, the community of Fort Simpson and the park to clarify the role each will play in providing services to Nahanni and other regional visitors in order to minimize duplication, conflicts and inefficiencies.

Departure services need to be better planned and integrated between CPS, the GNWT (Blackstone Territorial Park) and Nahanni Butte.

Nahanni Butte residents remain uncomfortable with CPS moving the operations centre from the Butte to Fort

Simpson. Nahanni Butte labourers on staff must be brought in to Fort Simpson to do minor maintenance work in town. This awkwardness leads to the conclusion on the part of Nahanni Butte residents that CPS will wish to change the situation by not hiring out of Nahanni Butte in the future as much as the park does now.

The development of tourist facilities in Nahanni Butte is not well integrated with CPS and NWT plans for Blackstone. The two facilities may end up in competition for camping and departure services for river trippers.

CPS does not have any written agreements with any of the three local communities outlining the role we will play in assisting the development of their tourism information facilities.

The park has the opportunity of helping foster the viability of an essential departure service for Nahanni visitors by assisting the Nahanni Expediting Services in setting up a telephone link between Nahanni Butte and Fort Simpson and by advertising its services in park information pieces.

7. A community outreach program is required to improve the local image of the park and build better relations with the park's neighbours.

Improvements are required in the extension effort of the park in local communities.

Community outreach efforts are constrained by a lack of person-years.

Park resources must be increased to create a visitor activities position with an adequate budget to carry out extension programming.

CPS should improve the overall image and perception of Nahanni in Fort Simpson.

The park should have a more consistent way of responding to requests by authors and film makers for substantial logistical support to ensure good working relations with them and the achievement of mutual objectives.

8. The interpretation themes and strategic and management messages for the park are not being interpreted in a comprehensive manner to park visitors or any segments of the general public.

The river guide is outdated and inaccurate and does not adequately communicate park themes to river trippers.

Interpretation training for park wardens is not adequate especially for leading hikes at Rabbitkettle Lake.

On-site interpretation information for day-users in some appropriate format is lacking both enroute into the park and at Virginia Falls. Day-users, especially those who do not visit the Fort Simpson VRC before flying into the park, may not meet any park staff or see any piece of park information throughout their Nahanni experience.

For local residents, the prime source of park interpretation information is the Fort SimpsonVRC. The VRC at present does not adequately interpret the park themes. The exhibits are introductory and present awareness-level, orientation and trip planning information only.

The VRC provides an inadequate service for highway travellers. They will not become aware of the main interpretation themes of the park.

9. The park has no overall stakeholder communication strategy to ensure continuing and effective exchange of information with stakeholders for mutual benefits.

This would include formal public participation, safety considerations, licensing changes, air charter scheduling, flight path guidelines, advertising, self-regulation scenario, installation of remote weather stations, providing park radio frequencies to charter companies etc.

The park should use Memoranda of Agreement to establish clear understandings between its partners when entering into co-operative ventures with stakeholders such as community information bureaus and air charter and outfitting operators.

The park should establish good communications and ensure continuity in working with the GNWT Departments of Economic Development and Tourism and Renewable Resources. Memoranda of Agreement should be prepared whenever co-operative ventures such as the sharing of facilities at Blackstone, support for business ventures such as water taxi and accommodation services and integrated planning of regional tourism developments are entered upon.

10. There are significant information gaps on day-users.

There is only an inadequate "comment book" feed-back mechanism at the falls to gather information on whether visitors are satisfied with their day visit to the falls.

CPS does not have good information about who day-visitors are, their age, physical capability and expectations.

Future Service Offer

Introduction

The purpose of this service plan is to identify what services are required to help the visitor have a successful park experience while ensuring the fundamental aspects of the park's mandate are fulfilled. These park experiences will vary depending on the visitor group needs and expectations and the park's ability to provide for them. By defining the intended park experience for each visitor group the appropriate services, facilities and opportunities can be planned for and provided.

Strategies for each service category are developed to provide for the needs and expectations of the park's Visitor Activity Groups. The strategies include service objectives as statements of intent as well as specific levels of service which define the standard of excellence which the park should provide in every visitor opportunity, service and facility.

The plan provides direction on how to achieve those objectives and meet those standards of excellence by identifying specific action strategies/action plans. They are specific for the first years of the life of this plan and general for the more distant future. The strategies identify both capital and O&M improvements. They indicate separate actions and categorize them by the type of action required such as O&M actions by park staff, park capital projects, joint park-region projects, cooperative ventures with other agencies or individuals and deferrals to the management plan review. Strategies are presented for each of the service categories used in analyses of the park carried out in the full situation analysis of the park.

The implementation strategy follows this statement of service offer. The major parameter determining the capability of the park to successfully implement this service offer is the presence or lack of a visitor activities position at the park along with sufficient goods and service funds to cover travel and programming costs. Readers of the future offer and level of service standards should be aware that they are based upon an assumption that additional person-year resources for visitor activities programming will be available in some form at the park.

Market Position

Tourism Role

The South Nahanni is Canada's premier wilderness river. Its national and international stature has been recognized by its double designation as a Canadian Heritage River and a World Heritage Area. Nahanni National Park protects a superb portion of the Mackenzie Mountain Natural Area of Canada.

Nahanni offers adventure, solitude and magnificent scenery for those Canadians and international visitors who are willing to accept the wilderness conditions of the park. They will experience Canada's greatest river canyons, its highest waterfalls, a vast wilderness of wildlife and forests, the legends of headless prospectors and lost adventurers that reverberate down the dark canyons and much more. Nahanni provides a fly-in, river-running experience for a wide range of river trippers. They can choose to descend the river in kayaks, canoes or rafts on their own reconnaissance or outfitted and guided by experienced Nahanni tourism operators. But motorized watercraft are not a part of the Nahanni experience.

There are actually three Nahanni's. West of the park boundary, the headwaters of the river offer long river reaches of continuous whitewater for the experienced enthusiast. Within the park, the river above the falls is calm as it meanders between the mountain chains that form the Nahanni Valley. Below the falls, the river current is more powerful as it is squeezed into the steep-walled canyons. The lower river is punctuated by very short sections of technically difficult rapids. This variety of river types allows Nahanni visitors to choose a river trip to match their experience, capabilities and the length of time they have available.

Those who are unable to travel down the river can get a taste of the Nahanni by chartering a plane and flying into Virginia Falls for a day-visit to one of the continent's last remaining great unaltered waterfalls.

Visitors can also backpack into the Mackenzie wilderness away from the river, fish for arctic grayling and enjoy technical climbing at its best on the steep faces of the Ragged Range mountains. Currently, it is river trippers who hike and fish in the park as an augmentation of their river experience but the future may bring visitors to the Mackenzie Mountains whose primary interest is wilderness backpacking as the opportunities are unparalleled. Due to its isolation, only a very few visi-

tors now climb the granite peaks of the Ragged Range. Most of them climb in the Cirque of the Unclimables just west of the park boundary.

All services and facilities in the park are in keeping with its over-riding wilderness character. Only essentials are provided but they are safe and sanitary. This low-key, basic support system does not detract from the dramatic landscapes that compel a deep contemplation of its natural wonders. The current and near future general park use scenario is that 500 people per year will spend 12 days each running the river and 500 per year will fly in to Virginia Falls to spend half of a day each in the park.

While too little use of the river will unnecessarily prevent people from enjoying the Nahanni, too much activity on the river will detract from the intensity of the Nahanni experience for many visitors. A balance must be drawn between protection of the wilderness character of the river and presentation of the recreational and interpretive opportunities to people.

Current visitor markets for Nahanni will not change significantly in the near future. The park management plan estimated that a reasonable upper reference level for the number of people who could descend the river each summer without seriously impairing the quality of the experience for the majority would be 3600 river trippers if all other components of the management scenario were set in place such as impact monitoring programs and interpretation and information programs. However, the park is experiencing a gradual growth of the river trippers sector and an unexpected accelerated growth of the day-users sector of the park use market. This change in the user mix presents a new context for assessing potential use levels on the river and suggests that additional stimulation of existing and potential markets for the use of the river is not appropriate in the near future.

New markets for the wilderness activity opportunities in the park will not be encouraged in the near future due to the difficulties involved in overcoming regional infrastructure and logistical constraints. The isolation of the park and lack of regional accommodation and outfitting services precludes such potentially appropriate activities as ski-touring and backpacking. New markets will in fact be adjuncts to existing markets or park activity groups. These would include fly-in overnight camping at the falls, air assisted access to other parts of the park, day-use at Rabbitkettle Lake and off-river hiking as an extension of a river trip. Any decision to actively attract new markets to the park will be made during the next management plan review.

Resource Protection Role

Nahanni National Park will protect the heritage resources of the river corridor by carefully balancing the dual mandate of preservation and use. The objectives, specific responsibilities and strategies for the resource protection role of the park are detailed in the park management plan and the park conservation plan. In general, natural processes will proceed essentially uninhibited by human activities to the maximum extent possible. However forest fire control measures will be taken in those areas of the park where they are required. Environmental impact assessments, water quality measurements and other environmental monitoring systems will be put in place to detect any deterioration in the wilderness character of the park whether from visitor activities or external factors. The establishment of preventative enforcement programs and visitor education programs are other components of the resource protection regime for the park.

Social Role

The park will build and maintain good neighbour relationships with Fort Simpson, Fort Liard and Nahanni Butte through employment policies and through the development of a community out-reach program of school programs, media contacts and participation in local tourism related plans and developments.

The park will create opportunities for people to get involved with the park by recruiting appropriate volunteers and organizing park activities aimed at increasing the positive public profile of the park in local communities.

Economic Role

The park will benefit regional communities through economic spin-offs related to employment opportunities and procurements in the provision of visitor services. Local preference will be exercised whenever possible.

The park will assist where possible the development of planned tourism facility in Nahanni Butte, Fort Liard and Fort Simpson in keeping with its policy of preferring that economic opportunities and tourism infrastructure related to the park be developed by local businesses and entrepreneurs outside of the park. Tourism outfitters, air charter operations and local accommodation and food services will all benefit from the operation of Nahanni.

The park will work closely with the GNWT and local governments and native bands to ensure that regional policies governing activities with economic consequences such as the licensing of outfitting operations and the management of flight seeing and other visitor services are observed to the extent possible.

The park will also work with the GNWT to encourage visitors to visit local communities as a part of their Nahanni experience to support local craft industries and other tourism facilities.

The Intended Park Experience

Visitors are satisfied with their park experience when their expectations for the trip are met or exceeded. The park must provide accurate information to all visitor activity groups on the type of experience they can expect prior to their visit. This intended park experience helps determine which opportunities, facilities and services will be provided by the park.

1. River-trippers

River-trippers commit significant thought, time, effort and money to their trip to the park. Their involvement tends to be deeper and more intense than any other user group. As they spend 10 to 12 days within the park program, they will experience deeper involvement with the park's heritage values and all of the interpretation themes. They will have a first hand experience of a World Heritage Site. They will enjoy a dramatic wilderness adventure as well as opportunities for contemplative solitude. They will have a range of river experiences to meet their various skill levels while enjoying an appropriately moderate level of comfort and safety support. They will camp in primitive facilities. Their river experience will challenge them physically and provide them with an opportunity to build self-esteem and self-affirmation. They will also have a sense of re-living the past by visiting the places that embody the myths and legends of the Nahanni. During de-registration, they will also be able to share their park experiences with a knowledgeable listener.

2. Day Users

The day users' decision to visit the park may be more spontaneous than the river-trippers' and in fact the day user may not have personal contact with any CPS staff before, during or after their visit. They will enjoy the excitement of a bush-plane flight and of flight-seeing the MacKenzie Mountains, confident that they are on a safe, licensed air service. They will also sample Nahanni's wilderness and majesty by visiting Virginia Falls, the focal point of the park. This experience is accessible in a safe, convenient package of suitably short duration.

During their visit, they will only learn about the four park themes at an awareness level or moderate level of detail through unobtrusive, low-key methods that will not significantly detract from the wilderness character of their experience. They might picnic, take photographs and go on a short hike at the falls. They will have an opportunity to give feedback to park management about their park experience.

3. Local Residents

Local residents tend not to visit the park itself but because of their geographic proximity and their historical relationship with the land, do in fact have a park or parks service experience. This experience is almost always off site and vicarious. They will be offered a higher level of insight into the park's national and international heritage values, four interpretation themes and parks service national mandate. This will develop in themselves, as a part of their experience, a greater sense of patrimony about the park. They will have year round access to park information and staff in Fort Simpson and will enjoy a climate of welcome and receptiveness in which they feel they can express their views, concerns and feelings about the park both through both formal and informal channels.

4. Highway Travellers

Highway travellers will have a vicarious experience of the park through a distant view of the MacKenzie Mountains and perhaps a visit to the park's Visitor Reception Centre in Fort Simpson. At the centre, they will be welcomed, provided with a sense of arrival and offered information about local services including food, restroom and picnic services. They will also have opportunities to learn about the park's national and international heritage values, four interpretation themes and the parks service mandate. This will reinforce their sense of adventure, discovery and excitement associated with experiencing the relatively unknown landscape of the sub-arctic. This will provide psychological and emotional satisfaction on its own but should also stimulate them to consider visiting the park itself in the future.

Service Strategies

1.0 Awareness Information Strategy

Service Objectives

Develop media that promote an awareness of northern parks in general and Nahanni specifically amongst southern Canadians and that educates them about its significance and management regime vicariously, without directly stimulating them to visit the park.

Build awareness of Nahanni as an international calibre protected wilderness area. Capitalize upon the World Heritage Site designation and the Canadian Heritage River status of the park.

Provide each visitor activity group with the realistic information they need to become aware of the wilderness management regime of the park, its services, facilities and programs and the dollar and time costs of visiting Nahanni so that they can become aware of the need to determine if the park meets their particular expectations.

Discussion

These strategies are primarily aimed at people outside the park. They will be designed to increase awareness without necessarily generating physical use of the park. It should also be noted that awareness is sometimes created through activities primarily aimed at providing another service such as en route information or heritage theme presentation.

Levels of Service

- Awareness will be generated through articles in local, regional, national and international periodicals, advertisements, television, radio and promotional shows.
- Produce a lure piece and include in every pre-trip package
- Produce an educational video and make it available to Canadian libraries and schools
- CPS will participate in awareness level communications with stakeholders and other outside agencies
- Park will build local awareness through the use of a variety of personal and non-personal extension activities

Strategies

1.1 All Visitor Activity Groups

1.1.1 Encourage periodical magazines to print articles about Nahanni by such means as providing logistical support for writers and photographers during site visits or loaning of reference materials to them. In addition, park staff will submit one draft article per year to one of those magazines for editorial consideration. The park may also purchase advertisement space in appropriate magazines. Examples would include; Equinox, Canadian Geographic, Explore, Up-Here, Audubon, Outside
O&M .02P.Y. EXISTING RESOURCES

1.1.2 Produce and circulate a portable exhibit on Nahanni. Such an exhibit could be sent to national trade shows or special events. It could also be loaned to interested parties such as outfitters or charter operators for promotion of the park and their businesses. It could be displayed locally when not on tour. **O&M .04 P.Y. CAPITAL $15.0**

1.1.3 Investigate the possibility of producing an IMAX film in conjunction with other national parks. Such a film would educate viewers about park environmental issues while creating considerable awareness across a broad spectrum of the population, and if used at international events would increase awareness of Nahanni in tourism markets of foreign countries. **REGION/PHQ**

1.1.4 Produce a 16mm or VHS film for generating greater awareness and appreciation of the park. Such a film or videotape could be distributed to libraries and schools on a wide scale and would be a sale item. **CAPITAL NEW $60.0**

1.1.5 Produce television commercials and radio public service announcements for airing on local radio and network television outlets. Airing of the commercials and PSAs should occur at a time of year when they would be most effective in creating awareness. Local PSA should occur whenever required. Commercials should be aired for a period of time at least once per year depending on the nature of the ad and availability of free or low cost exposure.
CAPITAL NEW $5.0

1.1.6 Produce and distribute a vivid, colourful, multi-spectrum poster or series of posters on Nahanni to increase general understanding and awareness of the park and for inclusion in the pre-trip information package. **CAPITAL $20.0**

1.1.7 Include a copy of the annual interpretive newsletter in each mail-out of pre-trip information.
(See 5.1.3 Heritage Theme Presentation Strategy)

1.1.8 Ensure awareness/pre-trip information about the park is stocked and distributed by the regional tourist information centres to encourage highway travellers to visit the VRC.
(See 3.1.1 Enroute Strategy)

1.2 Day-users

1.2.1 The park will encourage day-use by ensuring that specific information is enclosed in the pre-trip planning package to let potential visitors know that day use is an option for them. O&M $0.1

1.3 Local Residents

Due to the relocation of the operational base of the park from Nahanni Butte to Fort Simpson, the park will be able to play an increased role in the activities of local com munities. This will result in greater visibility for the park service and a reduction of local animosity and misunder standing of the park.

1.3.1 Produce an edukit for use by teachers in regional and local schools. Such an edukit could be sent to schools beyond the region if resources permit. (See 5.4.2 Heritage Theme Presentation Strategy)

1.3.2 Conduct personal interpretation programming throughout the year for a wide variety of local interest groups. These events would include annual Park's Day program, school programming for local and outlying schools, evening programming for the general public, programs at the local senior citizens' home. (See 5.4.1 Heritage Theme Presentation Strategy)

1.3.3 Participate in local events to develop awareness of CPS in the minds of local residents and provide opportunities for them to contact park staff. Activities include:

- Career days, once annually O&M .02 P.Y.
- Local Canada Day parade once per year O&M .02 P.Y.

1.3.4 During the re-development of the administration office and visitor reception centre, the park will work towards developing an appealing design for and approach to the building to increase local awareness of CPS and to encourage local residents to feel welcome inthe building. REGION

1.3.5 Produce theme related articles for the local newspaper. Four per year. EXISTING O&M .02 P.Y.

1.3.6 Introduce a system to loan videos and reference material from the park library to local residents. O&M .01 P.Y.

1.3.7 Conduct film nights at the VRC. Four per year. O&M .02 P.Y. $.01

2.0 Pre-trip Information Strategy

Service Objectives

Provide visitor activity groups with a comprehensive trip planning package that will assist in all aspects of planning a trip to Fort Simpson and the park.

Ensure potential visitors are made aware of the physical, logistical and monetary implications of visiting the park during the trip planning phase of their Nahanni experience.

Levels of Service

- park information published in travel planning guides will be accurate and updated annually
- provide a method to potential river-trippers to self assess their river skills
- park pre-trip information package will be comprehensive, accurate and annually updated
- all park staff responding to visitor inquiries for pre-trip infor mation will provide a consistent quality of information
- 24 hour telephone answering capability at Fort Simpson VRC
- include trip cost estimates in all trip planning information
- include park theme messages in all pre-trip information packages

Strategies

2.1 All Visitor Groups

2.1.1 Ensure the accuracy and appropriateness of the park's pictorial and editorial presence in travel planning publications such as;

Alaska Milepost
CAA/AAA Travel Guides
Readers Digest Travel Guides
GNWT Explorers Guide
Yukon Vacation Guide
Big River Travel Guide

The park will make contact with the editorial staff of those publications once each year to be aware of input deadlines early enough to prepare comprehensive material on the park suitable for each publication and where necessary to lobby for better representation of the park by convincing editorial staff of the key importance of Nahanni in the regional tourism picture. O&M .02 P.Y.

2.1.2 Ensure greater accuracy and relevance of existing park brochures contained in the park pre-trip information package

by carrying out a detailed annual review of the contents of each to record all inaccuracies such as those related to changes in operations, resources or regional activities and to work towards eliminating redundancies. The texts of all park information items should be stored on computer diskettes for ease of editing. O&M .01 P.Y.

2.1.3 Standardize information to be included in personal responses to visitor inquires by developing a fact manual for staff reference to ensure the consistent information is being provided to all visitors. This will allow all park staff to confidently provide more detailed information than presently exists on topics such as access, the high degree of self-reliance required in all aspects of wilderness river tripping, hazards and weather conditions to ensure that potential visitors have a realistic picture of what to expect in Nahanni. Visitors will then be better prepared to evaluate their own abilities prior to departure for the park. This park capability is very important due to the rapid turn-over of staff at Nahanni and the relatively short terms of many positions. The fact manual and standardized information will be stored on computer for ease of access and updating. O&M .06 P.Y. or VOLUNTEER PROJECT

2.1.4 Purchase and install a telephone answering machine with a bilingual message for recording of off-hours visitor inquires to park office/VRC O&M $.3

2.1.5 Provide realistic and current estimates of costs associated with a trip to the park and the region in park literature and park mail-outs. Such information would allow potential visitors to gauge their financial ability to travel to the region early in the trip planning stage of their holiday planning. O&M NO COST

2.2 Highway Travellers

All items listed above would apply to highway travellers. Adequate information will be provided to regional information centres. (See 3.1.1 Enroute Strategy)

2.3 Local Residents

2.3.1 Encourage outfitters to conduct clinics in Fort Simpson to introduce local people to canoeing skills and water safety. Such exercises could increase the awareness of local residents about the requirements for canoe tripping and may encourage local people to visit the park. O&M NO COST

2.4 Day-users

2.4.1 Reinforce the park messages in pre-trip information packages as many day-users will by-pass the VRC in Fort Simpson and could quite possibly not have any direct contact with CPS personnel before arriving at the falls. O&M NO COST

2.4.2 Encourage as many day-users as possible to visit the Fort Simpson VRC prior to their trip to the park by liasing closely with air charter operators based in Fort Simpson. O&M NO COST

2.5 River trippers

2.5.1 A self test tool will be included in all pre-trip information packages sent to all potential river trippers. (See 10.1.7 Public Safety Services Strategy)

3.0 Enroute Service Strategy

Service Objectives

Provide travellers with awareness and orientation level information on the park at strategic locations on the Liard, Mac- kenzie and Alaska Highways such as entry points to the region and all regional tourist information centres in order to heighten their sense of anticipation as they approach Nahanni.

Provide comprehensive advance and directional signage at major highway junctions on regional highways and within Fort Simpson.

Discussion

Enroute information is required to assist people traveling to the park to arrive there safely and conveniently. At Nahanni, there are two main enroute access patterns. Nahanni visitors may choose to travel to Fort Simpson enroute to the park or they may fly directly into the park from some other community or location. Enroute activities will also act as awareness generating mechanism for some highway travellers and thus will perform a dual service.

Levels of Service

- orientation directional information in four regional information centres available throughout the operational season.
- directional and informational signage at key locations along both the Liard and MacKenzie highways to locate park office and VRC at Fort Simpson.
- directional signage along main access route in Fort Simpson to locate park office and VRC.
- All air passengers will receive information packages for use inflight.

Strategies

3.1 All Visitor Activity Groups

3.1.1 Ensure that there is adequate information in regional information centres in Fort Liard, Fort Simpson, Yellowknife and at the Alberta-NWT border and in park literature describing the options of land and air access to the VRC and the park.
CAPITAL YKN 100.0, FT. LIARD 15.0, FORT SIMPSON 15.0, NWT BORDER 15.0 (See also 1.1.8 Awareness Strategy and 2.2 Pre-trip Information Strategy)

3.1.2 Make additions to the recently prepared sign plan to include directional signage within the village of Fort Simpson that identifies the location of the park office and visitor reception centre. **O&M and CAPITAL $2.0**

3.1.3 Locate directional/information highway signage at strategic points along the Liard and Mackenzie Highways to indicate that the highway does not lead to the park but to the park office and visitor reception centre. Suitable locations would include the Alaska Highway, Hay River, Fort Providence/Yellowknife, Fort Liard and Jean Marie River junctions. Any highway signage should include the corporate logo. Fort Simpson and the park office should be identified as the main an access point to the park. **O&M .02 P.Y. and CAPITAL**

3.2 River Trippers and Day-users

3.2.1 Information should be provided for visitors on planes enroute to the park to orient them to the regional physiography adjacent to the park and environmental features to make the flight more enjoyable and to heighten their sense of anticipation about arriving in the park. **O&M .1 P.Y. CAPITAL 20.0 and CO-OP.**

4.0 Reception Service Strategy

Service Objectives

Welcome all visitors using trained, uniformed park employees at Fort Simpson and Rabbitkettle Lake and by using non-personal methods at Virginia Falls and provide orientation information to them regarding the options they have for experiencing Nahanni.

Provide clearly located, sanitary public washrooms and other basic amenities commensurate with the setting of the reception function.

Provide visitor reception and information services which complement those of regional and local information facilities operated by the GNWT and other local interests.

Levels of Service

a) Fort Simpson Office and VRC

- Provide sense of arrival and welcome
- Adequate signage to direct people to the parking area, the main public entrance to the building and the VRC once inside
- Provide personal and non-personal services, exhibits and audio-visual productions at VRC
- The VRC will remain open on a daily basis from mid-June to mid-September from the hours of 08:00 to 20:00. Winter hours will be from 08:00 to 16:30 five days per week
- Visitors will be greeted year-round by trained, uniformed personnel at the building during operating hours
- The emphasis of the VRC will be to orient visitors to the park, to the logistics involved and to present the four general interpretive themes to all visitors
- Ensure that facilities and programs in the Visitor Reception Centre in Fort Simpson are easily and pleasantly accessible to all visitors. General landscape architectural factors such as sight lines, natural landscaping, interior factors such as restroom facilities, sources of drinking water and first aid services will be carefully planned for visitor convenience.
- Provide opportunity for stakeholders to provide information to the public
- Provide washrooms, drinking water, garbage disposal

b) Virginia Falls

- Non-personal reception services will be provided to greet day-users and river-trippers.

c) Rabbitkettle Lake

- Personal reception services will be provided at Rabbitkettle Lake for visitors arriving between late June and September of each year. There will also be non-personal reception at Rabbitkettle Lake as a small percentage of park visitors arrive at that location prior to it being staffed each spring.

Strategies

4.1 Fort Simpson

4.1.1 The park will completely re-develop the existing visitor reception facility in Fort Simpson in conjunction with the current operations redevelopment project. This will include replacing displays and exhibits, creating new audio-

visual programming, increasing its theatre capacity and renovating printed material. CAPITAL 165.0 REGION

4.1.2 A high quality slide show will be produced to specifically orient river-trippers and day-users to the park. It will help create a sense of anticipation for their upcoming trip. This program would also be of use and interest to Highway Travellers. CAPITAL Included in 4.1.1 REGION

4.1.3 All designated reception staff at the Fort Simpson VRC will receive hospitality training and a park orientation trip before the visitor season, in addition to receiving a general orientation to the park, its management strategy and interpretation themes. EXISTING O&M $2.5

4.1.4 Signage at the Fort Simpson visitor reception centre will be improved to heighten the sense of arrival and welcome for visitors as well as clearly identifying the facility as the headquarters for Nahanni. CAPITAL $2.5 (SIGN)

4.1.5 Interim provisions may be made for local businesses, outfitters and other private operators to display their literature in the VRC for visitors until the municipal information bureau is completed. (See also 11.1.3 Regional Integration Strategy) O&M NO COST

4.1.6 During the redevelopment stage, consideration will be given to provision of a small (2-3 table) day-use facility on the grounds of the park office/VRC complete with garbage disposal and a source of drinking water. This facility will be primarily for the use of Highway Travellers. It will be designed to integrate with plans for similar facilities that may be constructed by the GNWT or tour operators. (See 7.1.1 Support Service Strategy)

4.2 Day-users

4.2.1 Provide unobtrusive forms of non-personal reception at Virginia Falls. Changes will be made to the park sign plan to include a park identification sign. A site map will be posted in the kiosk near the landing area that will direct day-users to the pit-privies located in the campground. Notices regarding the pack-in/pack-out garbage policy, the importance of not disposing of garbage in the pit-privies, interpretive information and a guest book for people to record their comments will also be posted in the reception kiosk. CAPITAL $10.0 REGION

4.3 River Trippers

4.3.1 Reception services will be provided at Rabbitkettle Lake by a member of the warden service, or by a volunteer, from late June through early September. An orientation to the immediate area, registration services and sales of fishing licenses will continue to be provided for visitors. EXISTING O&M

5.0 Heritage Theme Presentation Strategy

Service Objectives

Interpret all major park themes for all visitors at levels of detail appropriate to the location and media used. All themes will be interpreted off-site at Fort Simpson and on-site using a comprehensive river guide. Portions of the themes may also be interpreted at other locations and by other means.

Ensure that all CPS staff providing interpretation receive an adequate level of training and that they deliver consistent messages to park visitors to ensure program quality.

Capitalize upon the Canadian Heritage River and World Heritage Site status of the park during program delivery.

Present strategic themes including concepts of sustainable development and parks as sites of environmental excellence to all visitor groups in appropriate ways.

Levels of Service

- Present all 4 park themes to 100% of each visitor group in the park or at the park office/VRC.
- Personal Interpretation:

  On demand hikes to hotsprings at Rabbitkettle Lake

  Provide quality control for interpretive information presented by all private operators

  Extension programs to local groups

- Non-personal Interpretation:

  Self-guiding pamphlet for all day users at Virginia Falls presenting all four theme messages, safety messages, Canadian Heritage Rivers and World Heritage Sites available on-site, Fort Simpson VRC and from air carriers to site. River guide for all river users

- Trail guide to provide orientation and interpretation to area hiking trails
- Produce an annual interpretive newsletter
- Edu-kit for distribution to local and regional schools

Strategies

5.1 All Visitor Groups

5.1.1 The park will present four main interpretive themes, the central concepts of the parks service strategic plan and significant related management messages to each of the visitor activity groups. The communication themes are:

i) Geomorphology of the South Nahanni River Corridor

ii) Ecology of the Mackenzie Mountains

iii) History of the Nahanni wilderness

iv) The Meaning and Management of Wilderness

v) Sustainable Development in National Parks

vi) Nahanni as an example of heritage resource protection and presentation excellence

vii) The Changing Global Context for the Management of Nahanni

In-park interpretation will be provided for day-users and river-trippers. Highway travellers and local residents will be presented with a vicarious experience through interpretive facilities at Fort Simpson and through publications.

5.1.2 The park will propose a memorandum of agreement with the GNWT to cooperatively develop integrated regional interpretation services at Blackstone Landing Territorial Park. This will provide services for highway travellers who do not plan on visiting Fort Simpson. It will also serve to reinforce the messages provided to river-trippers. (See also 11.1.6 Regional Integration Strategy)
CAPITAL REGION CO-OP.

5.1.3 Produce a newsletter on an annual basis which would include natural history information, event schedules and promotions for exhibits and programs. It will be included as part of the mail-out information package and mailed out to former park visitors as a departure service to reinforce park messages and to build a constituency for the park. **O&M .06 P.Y. $5.0**

5.2 Day-Users

5.2.1 Develop a self-guiding brochure for day-use at Virginia Falls to present interpretation themes, safety messages and information on the Canadian Heritage River and World Heritage Site status of the Nahanni. This would be made available in Fort Simpson, from air charter companies and at Virginia Falls in the kiosk. **CAPITAL $30.0**

5.3 River Trippers

5.3.1 Continue to provide a personally guided hike to the hotsprings for all visitors at Rabbitkettle Lake. Depending on the availability of staff resources, further develop personal interpretive programming at Rabbitkettle to present the four park themes to visitors at campfire talks and by means of additional interpretive hikes. **O&M .06 P.Y.**

5.3.2 Develop small-scale interpretive information displays for the two existing kiosks in the river corridor, Rabbitkettle and Virginia Falls, Additional kiosks would not be established for such purposes. **CAPITAL $15.0**

5.3.3 Redevelop the river guide to improve its quality, upgrade its presentation of interpretation themes, update information and correct inaccuracies. **CAPITAL $40.0**

5.3.4 To ensure that high quality information is delivered to clients on commercial rafting or canoe trips, all guides should be tested for their knowledge of park interpretation themes and resource features. This should become a criteria for certification. Currently certified guides would be grandfathered. Only new guides would be tested.

5.4 Local Residents

5.4.1 Conduct personal interpretation programming throughout the year for a wide variety of local interest groups. These events would include:

Park's Day program once annually **O&M .04 P.Y.**

Personal programming at local schools

Four per year travel to outlying schools for person programming during the winter months. In the re gion, this would include Nahanni Butte, Fort Liard, Trout Lake, Jean Marie River and Wrigley, one per school per year **O&M .06 P.Y. $4.0**

Evening programs for the general public, four per year **O&M .08 P.Y.**

Conduct programs at the local senior citizens home, two per year **O&M .02 P.Y.**

5.4.2 Produce an edukit for use by teachers in regional and local schools. Such an edukit could be sent to schools beyond the region if resources permit.
CAPITAL NEW $25.0

6.0 Recreational Opportunities Strategy

Service Objectives

Manage Nahanni in a manner that provides a superlative wilderness river tripping experience for rafters and canoeists and which portrays a powerful sense of a dramatic protected wilderness for other groups who may not actually visit the park.

Encourage self-reliance amongst river trippers based upon personal ability and experience, the practice of no-trace camping and informal self-regulation amongst outfitters in order to provide a safe wilderness river experience for all visitors.

Within the guidelines of the management plan, provide opportunities for a broader spectrum of the general population to enjoy Nahanni.

Discussion

General Service Priorities:

In keeping with the designation of river tripping as the core of the intended park visitor experience, the importance of providing a short-term day-use opportunity for visitors and the relative importance of Fort Simpson as a focal point of the visitor activity program, the following are the ranked priorities with regard to overall servicing of facilities and services supporting recreational opportunities for park visitors:

1. Portages with markers, information, radio communication, warden patrols and other basic safety and trip logistics provisions
2. Virginia Falls
3. Rabbitkettle Lake
4. All primitive campgrounds
5. Fort Simpson VRC
6. Hiking Routes/Trails
7. Support for spelunking and technical climbing

Levels of Service

- Provide on-site information on recreational opportunities at Virginia Falls
- Provide 6 designated campgrounds; 2 at a semi-primitive level and 4 at a primitive level. (Detailed level of service for each to be derived in L.A.C. exercise)
- Provide 4 designated, primitive hiking trails
- Sell fishing licences at Rabbitkettle Lake and Fort Simpson VRC

Strategies

6.1 Day-Users

6.1.1 Recreational opportunities for day-users at Virginia Falls are limited due to time constraints. Most day-users only have 2 to 3 hours of ground time. During this time, the opportunities that do exist include; photography, hiking, picnicing, wildlife viewing and flight seeing. The park will continue to support and facilitate these activities through maintenance of existing trails and boardwalks and the provision of on-site information at the kiosk for day-users. **O&M EXISTING .08 P.Y. $3.0 CAPITAL CONTINUING**

6.2 River-Trippers

6.2.1 Non-motorized wilderness river tripping, random wilderness camping and camping at designated locations will continue to be the focal recreational opportunities in the park. To this end, the existing four designated campsites will be retained. The park will continue to monitor other sites frequently used to determine the level of impact and the possibility of necessary mitigating measures in the future. Rabbitkettle Lake and Virginia Falls will be designated as semi-primitive campgrounds while Rabbitkettle Portage and Kraus Hotsprings will be designated as primitive campgrounds. Future site improvements at Pulpit Rock and the existing Deadmen Valley Forestry Cabin site will be designated as primitive. Minimum facilities will be provided. During any orientation proceedings and in park literature, random camping will be encouraged as much as possible. All locations receiving camping pressure will have management prescriptions prepared for them and standards set to establish Limits of Acceptable Change. Future park monitoring of the visitor needs at and activity impact on the sites will take place within that monitoring system. **EXISTING O&M**

6.2.2 The park will continue to work towards providing formally designated hiking routes at:

1) Sunblood Mountain
2) Hole-in-the-Wall Lake,
3) Lafferty Creek to the Karstlands. Access to the Tlogotsho Plateau will be investigated for its potential designation in the future.

Future designated hiking routes will be primitive in character. All will require thorough environmental assessment and review. Only low-level improvements will be made where absolutely necessary for resource preservation and visitor safety. It is not anticipated that any bridges will be constructed, or that any brushing will occur. Unobtrusive trail markers consisting of stone cairns may be built where necessary for safety and trail delineation. When demand requires it, the trail guide for hiking opportunities will be upgraded in quality. **O&M .12 P.Y. (.04 P.Y. PER TRAIL) CAPITAL $60.0**

6.2.3 Portages will continue to be maintained for public safety. Highly visible portage markers will be installed at both the Figure 8 (Hell's Gate), and Cascade-of-the-Thirteen Steps Portages. (See 10.1.8 Public Safety Services Strategy)

6.2.4 As very few visitors engage in technical climbing in the park, it will continue to be an unrestricted activity. If the number of climbers increases, the park will more actively manage the activity.

6.2.5 Spelunking opportunities will be examined. Hazard Assessments will be reviewed to reach decisions concerning either public access possibilities or deferral of the activity. Grotte Valerie will remain closed to the public unless permission is granted by the Park Superintendent. If it is felt that a proposed sites can be safely entered without threat of damage to any features or significant safety hazards to the public, a park directive will be prepared defining access procedures. The permission of the Superintendent will be mandatory in any case. **EXISTING O&M .04P.Y.**

6.2.6 Fishing will continue to be an unrestricted activity. Fishing licences will be sold at Fort Simpson, Yellowknife, on the river by patrolling wardens and Rabbitkettle Lake. The park will continue monitoring the fish stocks in the park and if restrictions are required, mitigating measures such as closed seasons, modified catch limits, or imposed fishing practices such as barbless hooks will be proposed. **O&M NO COST**

6.2.7 Charter companies will be encouraged to observe the low-level flight corridor guidelines of the park to make overflights less obtrusive for visitors already in the park. Also to encourage charter companies to schedule their flight departures and arrivals at appropriate times of the day to avoid disturbing visitors already in the park. **O&M NO COST**

7.0 Support Service Strategy

Service Objectives

Ensure that the design of future reception facilities in Fort Simpson creates a thoroughly barrier-free environment for pedestrians and safe easy access for all vehicular traffic.

Monitor camping locations along the river corridor to ensure that levels of use and resultant impacts on the environment meet a standard in keeping with the wilderness character of Nahanni.

Provide basic day-use facilities at Virginia Falls.

Educate park visitors concerning the pack-in/pack-out garbage policy of the park and low impact camping practices in general and support the program by providing appropriate facilities along the river and ensuring adequate supplies of garbage bags.

Maintain campground and day-use facilities on a regular basis.

Contact visitors within the park and during de-registration to obtain information on facilities requiring maintenance and other areas of concern to them.

Discussion

Support services include access, transportation, accommodation, sanitation, and sustenance. As Nahanni is a wilderness park, sustenance and accommodation services beyond wilderness camping levels are not applicable. However, primitive camping facilities, sanitation and designated access points are provided for visitors. Support services at the VRC have also been identified as part of 3.0 Reception Strategy and are at a basic level of service.

Levels of Service

- Designated floatplane landing sites with docking facilities will be maintained
- Maintain heli-pad at Virginia Falls
- Maintain boardwalk system at Virginia Falls
- Six designated campgrounds: two semi-primitive, 4 primitive
- Earth pit privies at each designated camp ground
- No on-site solid waste disposal facility at campgrounds, pack in/pack out policy
- Potable water available at designated campgrounds and VRC
- Food caches will be provided at each designated camp ground
- Easily accessible washrooms will be provided at the VRC
- Limited garbage disposal facilities will be available at the VRC

Strategies

7.1 All Visitor Groups

7.1.1 In Fort Simpson, basic services will be provided in the Administration/Visitor Reception building. These will include washrooms, drinking water and, potentially, a small day-use picnic area with garbage disposal. All new support services designed during the course of redeveloping the office will be accessible to disabled visitors. **CAPITAL $3.0 REGION**

7.2 Day-Users

7.2.1 At Virginia Falls, a landing dock for planes and canoes, a helipad and boardwalks will be maintained. EXISTING O&M .02 P.Y.

7.2.2 Along the boardwalk, at regular intervals, between the docking area and the promontories the park will establish unobtrusive benches to allow elderly, or less physically fit day-users to sit and rest while walking between the landing area near the campground and the promontories.
ONGOING CAPITAL & O&M

7.3 River-Trippers

7.3.1 Refer to camping in section 6.2.1 Recreational Opportunities Strategy

7.3.2 Rabbitkettle Lake and Virginia Falls will remain the only designated landing sites within the park. Docking facilities for float planes at these two locations will be maintained. The park will continue to encourage air charter companies to minimize low level overflights.

7.3.3 All visitor circulation in the park will continue to be non-motorized.

8.0 Departure Service Strategy

Service Objectives

Provide de-registration services for river trippers to enable park staff to reinforce park messages, gather information from visitors and allow them to talk about their Nahanni experience.

Develop opportunities for the production of appropriate park souvenir sale items.

To the degree possible, assist visitors with their departure logistics by offering access to telephones and supporting private water taxi services.

Levels of Service

Personal de-registration of all river-trippers will be done during the visitor season

8.1 All Visitor Groups

8.1.1 The park will investigate the possibility of developing sale items such as posters, slide sets and books. These items will be best handled by the private sector. It may be that the park may sell them through the visitor reception centre.
O&M NEW .02 P.Y.

8.1.2 The park will design pamphlets and brochures which will also function as departure mementoes.
NO COST O&M

8.1.3 Visitors will be encouraged to visit the VRC upon completion of their Nahanni experience if they did not have reason or chance to visit it previously. NO COST O&M

8.1.4 Mail out to all previous year's park visitors a copy of the park's annual interpretive newsletter as a departure service to reinforce park messages and to build a constituency for the park. (See 5.1.3 Heritage Theme Presentation)

8.2 River Trippers

8.2.1 Personal de-registration services will continue to be provided by park wardens at Nahanni Butte and in Fort Simpson for all river trippers during the visitor season. This will provide a good opportunity to gather feedback from all overnight visitors on their trip, to reinforce messages and to provide a positive departure image for the park to reinforce memories of visitors Nahanni experience.
O&M .16 EXISTING P.Y.

9.0 Resource Protection Strategy

Service Objectives

Define and implement only those visitor management strategies which will minimize impacts on the park environment by ensuring that they meet the requirements of the Environmental Assessment and Review Process

For the purposes of visitor safety and education and the enforcement of park regulations maintain staff on-site at Rabbitkettle Lake and conduct regular patrols of the river throughout the visitor season.

Levels of Service

- Establish and maintain regular monitoring program to en sure visitor use impact is within acceptable limits
- Ensure all in-park users are provided with information on low impact camping philosophy and regulations
- Conduct regular patrols of the river during visitor season
- Maintain warden presence at Rabbitkettle Lake during visitor season

9.1 All Visitor Groups

9.1.1 The park will continue to carry out resource monitoring programs to identify impacts created by visitor activities. These programs will include:

- campground impact monitoring
- creel census
- water quality monitoring
- Rabbitkettle Hotsprings impact monitor trail monitoring EXISTING O&M P.Y.

9.1.2 The importance of low impact camping, pack-in/pack-out garbage policy for the protection of park resources will continue to be stressed to all user types during the visitor registration process and in all park literature.
NO COST O&M

9.1.3 During and after the re-development of the boardwalks and promontories at Virginia Falls, information will be included in the kiosk to inform day-users of the fragility of many northern plant species and of the importance of staying on the established trails. NO COST O&M

9.1.4 Continue regular jet boat patrols (maximum 3 per visitor season) and canoe patrols (minimum 3 per visitor season) to provide resource conservation monitoring and presence as well as for public safety.
(See 10.1.1 Public Safety Strategy)

10.0 Public Safety Strategy

Service Objectives

Ensure that potential visitors are made aware of the physical requirements and the skill levels necessary to visit Nahanni.

Sustain the capability to provide immediate action in the event of emergencies.

Prepare and implement Public Safety, Bear Management and Fire Management plans, hazard assessments and other analyses as required to ensure visitor safety.

Design of all facilities and services with special regard for public safety and conduct regular inspections of facilities to identify and resolve potential safety hazards.

Maintain communication links between patrol cabins and the administration centre in Fort Simpson.

Levels of Service

- All park wardens receive annual comprehensive pre-season safety training
- Maximum of 3 jet boat patrols and 3 canoe patrols per season
- Provide current in-park weather conditions to air operators on demand
- Have current and comprehensive search and rescue, public safety bear management and fire management plans in place
- Effective 24 hour per day communication line between park and Fort Simpson as well as within park
- Provide 24 hour per day visitor access to emergency communication equipment at all warden patrol cabins
- Provide all river-trippers with a method to self-assess their skills prior to coming to the park
- Provide orientation information to all in-park visitors regarding bear hazards

Strategies

10.1 River Trippers

10.1.1 There will continue to be a maximum of 3 jet-boat patrols and a minimum of 3 canoe patrols during each visitor season. These patrols will be multi-purpose in nature with the main emphasis on resource conservation and providing assistance to river trippers. (See also 9.1.4 Resource Protection Strategy) EXISTING O&M .24 P.Y.

10.1.2 All resource conservation personnel will continue to receive pre-season safety training in canoeing, firefighting, climbing, handling and use of firearms, bear immobilization and first aid. Employees will be encouraged to practice these skills and keep abreast of new developments.
O&M EXISTING $13.0

10.1.3 The park will pursue the development of a remote weather station that will enable personnel to call-up current weather conditions in the park. Such information will provide important public safety factor to air charter companies.
O&M EXISTING .O2 P.Y. CAPITAL $20.0

10.1.4 The park will update and maintain the search and rescue plan. O&M EXISTING .08 P.Y.

10.1.5 The park will maintain effective means of communication within the park and between the park and Fort Simpson. A call box that could be situated at warden patrol cabins for emergency use by visitors will be investigated and tested.
O&M NO COST

10.1.6 The park will ensure that the sign plan contains all safety warning signs required by hazard assessments.
O&M NO COST

10.1.7 Include a self-test mechanism for visitors in the pre-trip information package to allow them to evaluate their own preparedness and abilities to help ensure that they can navigate the river and protect themselves in the event of emergency. O&M .04 P.Y.

10.1.8 Portages will continue to be maintained for public safety. Highly visible portage markers will be installed at both the Figure 8 (Hell's Gate), and Cascade-of-the-Thirteen Steps Portages. O&M $.1

10.2 Day-Users

10.2.1 The park will ensure that the sign plan addresses all requirements of the park hazard assessment and general concerns for the safety of visitors at the promontories at Virginia Falls. **O&M NO COST**

10.2.2 Ensure that air charter operators provide day-use visitors with adequate precautionary information concerning safety around propellers and other aspects of flying in and departing from small planes. **O&M NO COST**

10.2.3 As it may not occur to many day-users that they need to take precautions, or at least be aware of the possibility of encountering a bear, the park will post the "You are in Bear Country" brochure at the kiosk at Virginia Falls. **O&M NO COST**

11.0 Regional Integration Strategy

Service Objectives

Participate with Economic Development & Tourism (GNWT), the Fort Simpson Chamber of Commerce, the Park Management Board after the settlement of land claims and other organizations in market research and promotional campaigns and providing support for future business and tourist opportunities relevant to the park.

Build partnerships with the local business community to improve the park's local profile and to create greater awareness amongst the local business community that park visitors translate into economic revenue.

Develop a joint interpretation program in the region with the Department of Economic Development & Tourism (GNWT)

Levels of Service

- Provide annual orientation/training to key outside tourist information facilities

Strategies

11.1 All Visitor Groups

11.1.1 Providing training and orientation by either personal means or through information packages to non-park staff at information kiosks within the region, including the kiosk on the Alberta-NWT border, in Fort Liard and in Fort Nelson, BC. **O&M .04 P.Y.**

11.1.2 Develop, with the GNWT, a joint plan based on a memorandum of agreement to provide better regional highway signage including directional signs, bill-boards, and interpretive pull-offs on the highways leading to Fort Simpson and Blackstone. (See also 3.1.3 Enroute Strategy) **O&M .04 P.Y. CAPITAL $35.0**

11.1.3 Ensure the Fort Simpson VRC complements other regional information centres and does not compete with or duplicate services. Provide space in the information racks for the distribution of regional literature of other tourism agencies and private operators as needed. (See also 4.1.5 Reception Strategy) **O&M NO COST**

11.1.4 Establish contacts with tour bus operators to determine their requirements for accommodating their clients through better design of the new VRC. **O&M .01 P.Y.**

11.1.5 In general, support territorial government initiatives and business development initiatives of Nahanni Butte, Fort Liard and Fort Simpson in the area of tourism activities that relate to the park through the development of memoranda of agreement on such items as the GNWT Yellowknife information centre and the Fort Liard information centre. **O&M .04 P.Y. CAPITAL**

11.1.6 Proposal of a memorandum of agreement with the GNWT to cooperatively develop integrated regional interpretation services at Blackstone Landing Territorial Park. (See 5.1.2 Heritage Theme Presentation Strategy)

11.2 Day-Users

11.2.1 Investigate the possibility of involving corporate sponsors for the self-guiding brochure for day-users to Virginia Falls by offering advertising space in the brochure. Alternately, investigate the possibility of jointly producing the brochure with the GNWT. **O&M .04 P.Y. CAPITAL (NOTED ELSEWHERE)**

12.0 Socio-Economic Information Strategy

Service Objectives

Provide an opportunity for members of each Visitor Activity Group to comment on the Nahanni experience

To develop and maintain a socio-economic data base that contains information on visitor satisfaction as well as use/effectiveness of all services and facilities

Levels of Service

- All river trippers will be personally de-registered by park staff
- 10% of visitors to the VRC will be provided with a method of commenting on services and facilities provided in Fort Simpson.
- All day users will be provided with a method of commenting on their park experience

Strategies

12.1 All visitor groups

12.1.1 Existing personal de-registration procedures will be continued at Nahanni Butte and Fort Simpson.
(See 8.2.1 Departure Service Strategy)

12.1.2 VRC visitors will be informally surveyed O&M

12.1.3 A comment and registration book will be maintained at Virginia Falls. On regular occasions, pilots will be asked to provide insight into the level of satisfaction of day-users with their Virginia Falls experience. O&M

13.0 Access for Disabled Persons Strategy

Service Objectives

To provide disabled persons of each visitor activity group with opportunities to experience Nahanni through direct access to basic services and representational access to recreational opportunities and themes

Levels of Service

- All facilities at the VRC in Fort Simpson will be ph, sically accessible to sight, hearing and mobility impaired visitors at national standards or better
- The four interpretation themes will be intellectually acces sible to sight, hearing and mobility impaired visitors

Strategies

13.1 All Visitors

13.1.1 All aspects of the Fort Simpson office and VRC will be accessible to mobility impaired visitors. In addition, the information, exhibits and audio-visual services provided there will be designed to ensure that hearing and sight impaired visitors will be able to learn about the significance of the park and its major interpretation themes.
CAPITAL DEFINED ELSEWHERE

13.1.2 Information on the availability of services for disabled visitors will be included in all awareness-level and trip planning information distributed by the park. O&M

Implementation Strategy

Setting Priorities

1. Cost/Impact

Action requirements in the service strategies were priorized using the trial VAMP priorizing procedure as a guide. This process consists of first categorizing all action items into one of four classes;

1. Low Cost/High Impact
2. High Cost/High Impact
3. Low Cost/Low Impact
4. High Cost/Low Impact

Low cost projects require less than 10.0 and are typically O&M. **High cost** projects require more than 10.0 and are typically Capital.

Low impact items affect few visitors, low priority visitor activity groups or have minimal effects on park operations.

High impact items affect large numbers of visitors, important visitor activity groups or have significant effects on park operations.

Results

Many items were low cost/high impact O&M in nature. They appear early in the schedule. There were very few high cost/low impact items (Trail development and new publications). These were essentially deferred beyond the planning horizon of this service plan.

2. Objectives/Operations

Subsequently, items within the high cost/high impact and low cost/low impact categories were priorized using the following criteria each of which implies a relatively high priority;

1. Relates to an on-going project
2. Supports protection objectives of the park
3. Supports visitor safety requirements
4. Supports heritage presentation objectives
5. Strengthens regional integration relationships
6. Additional management direction not required

Results

Of the 78 implementation action requirements, in the Implementation Strategy, 40 can be carried out with O&M resources. Most of these are scheduled in the first years of the life of the plan and many can be undertaken using existing O&M resources.

Thirty-eight of the action requirements will require capital funding. These are rolled up into 14 capital projects. Most of these projects will not require funding until the later years of the schedule. (Year 3 and 4, 1992/93 and future years). Some projects such as the on-going camping pressure study may or may not require future capital resources. That will depend upon the setting of the Limits of Acceptable Change and the preparing of management prescriptions for each camping locations. Major O&M scheduled changes are included here as well.

Action items below are followed by numbers relating to service strategy items.

1990-91

Standardise visitor enquiries information. O&M
2.1.3

Telephone answering machine with bilingual message. O&M
2.1.4

One article per year for local newspapers on interpretive themes. O&M
1.3.5 1.2.2

Hospitality training and a spring in-park orientation trip for reception staff. PNRO Trainer or Wood Buffalo staff. CAPITAL O&M
4.1.3

VRC Hours. Mid-June to mid-September 0800 to 2000. O&M

Personal reception services at Rabbitkettle Lake. Late June to early September. O&M
4.3.1 5.3.1 9.1.2

Camping activities monitored bi-annually. Removal of campsites at Marengo Creek, Big Bend, Dry Canyon Creek and confluence of the Flat and Nahanni. Pit privy constructed at The Gate.
6.2.1

Management prescriptions and levels of acceptable change prepared for all sites for future monitoring. O&M and FUTURE CAPITAL

Creel census. O&M
9.1.1

Benches on boardwalk at Virginia Falls. CAPITAL
7.2.2

Continue with the present de-registration process. O&M
8.2.1

Slide sets and commentaries for loan to the public. O&M
1.3.6

Rabbitkettle Hotsprings and Camping activity impact monitoring programs. O&M
9.1.1

Maintain current patrol schedule. O&M
10.1.1 9.1.4

Pre-season training for park wardens O&M
10.1.2

Revise Search and Rescue Plan O&M
10.1.4

Include information on park themes in revised guide test. O&M
5.3.4

Remote weather station. O&M FUTURE CAPITAL Concept/project definition PIPS
10.1.3

Portable exhibit. CAPITAL Concept PIPS. Develop exhibits in subsequent years.
1.1.2

Personal interpretation programming throughout the year. CAPITAL P.Y.
1.3.2 5.4.1

IMAX film. PNRO/PHQ CAPITAL
1.1.3

Support business opportunities at Nahanni Butte. O&M
11.1.5

Fort Simpson Admin/VRC Centre Redevelopment. Planning. Continue Conceptual Planning CAPITAL
1.3.4 4.1.1 4.1.2 4.1.3 4.1.4 4.1.6 7.1.1 11.1.3 11.1.4 13.1.1

The following items are of moderate or low priority. Any items not achieved in 1990/91 will be deferred until 1991/92.

Information on realistic costs of Nahanni trip for trip planning information package. O&M
2.1.5

Create a system to loan videos and reference materials. O&M
1.3.6

Fort Simpson film nights three times each year. O&M
1.3.7

Annual letter to air charter operators issuing park use permits to contain specific conditions. O&M
3.2.1 6.2.7 10.2.2

Uniformed staff to greet the public year round. O&M

Distribute literature of other government departments and businesses. O&M
4.1.5

Hazard assessments. Grotte Mickey and Grotte Louise by 1991/92 for visitor use potential O&M
6.2.5

992/93

Promotional video and television promotional commercials on park themes. CAPITAL: Concept PAD 92/93 Prelim. Design 93/94
1.1.4 1.1.5

Nahanni poster series. CAPITAL: Concept PAD 92/93 Prelim. Design 93/9
4 1.1.6

Upgrade two existing kiosks CAPITAL: Concept PAD 91/92 Prelim. Design 92/93 Construct 93/94
4.2.1 5.3.2 6.1.1 9.1.3 10.2.3

Local personal programming. CAPITAL OR O&M PY
1.3.2 1.3.3 5.4.1

Comprehensive review of park publications program. CAPITAL: Concept 91/92 Prelim. Design 92/93 Production 93/94
1.2.1 2.1.2 2.4.1 3.2.1 5.1.1 5.2.1 5.3.3 6.2.2 8.1.2 9.1.2 11.2.1 13.1.1 13.1.2

Fort Simpson Admin/VRC Centre Redevelopment. CAPITAL Prelim. Design/Begin Constr. 92/93 PNRO PROJECT MANAGER
1.3.4 4.1.1 4.1.2 4.1.3 4.1.4 4.1.6 5.1.2 7.1.1 11.1.3 11.1.4 11.1.6 13.1.1

Explore expansion of Rabbitkettle Lake interpretation O&M
5.3.1

1993/94

Promotional video and television commercials on park themes. CAPITAL: Concept PAD 92/93 Prelim. Design 93/94

1.1.4 1.1.5

Edu-kit. CAPITAL

1.3.1 5.4.2

Upgrade two existing kiosks CAPITAL: Concept PAD 91/92 Prelim. Design 92/93 Construct 93/94

4.2.1 5.3.2 6.1.1 9.1.3 10.2.3

Comprehensive review of park publications program. CAPITAL: Concept PAD 91/92 Prelim. Design 92/93 Production 93/94

1.2.1 2.1.2 2.4.1 3.2.1 5.1.1 5.2.1 5 .3.3 6.2.2 8.1.2 9.1.2 11.2.1 13.1.1 13.1.2

Fort Simpson Admin/VRC Centre redevelopment. CAPITAL: Prelim. Design and Beginning of Construction and Exhibit Fabrication 92/93 Complete construction 93/94 PNRO PROJ. MNG.

1.3.4 4.1.1 4.1.2 4.1.3 4.1.4 4.1.6 5.1.2 7.1.1 11.1.3 11.1.4 11.1.6 13.1.1

Begin production of park newsletter. O&M (Possible Capital)

5.1.3

Additional interpretive programming at Rabbitkettle. O&M

5.3.1

Agreement on joint CPS/GNWT programming at Blackstone O&M

5.1.2

Orientation training for regional information centre attendants O&M

11.1.1

1994/95

Subsequent years will be directed by revised management plan to be completed in 93/94

Person-Years

In total, capital and O&M projects will require at least .8 P.Y. of visitor activities support for implementation. About .63 PY's are required annually for on-going O&M work while about .08 PY's per year for the five year horizon of the plan is required for one-time O&M projects. Capital project management at the park level would require on average about .16 PY's. Administrative overhead would total about .16 PY

Annual recurring O&M activities

Encourage periodical articles	.02
Circulate portable exhibit	.02
Participate in local events	.04
Four articles for local paper	.02
Loan system for park videos	.01
Conduct four film nights	.01
Contact editors of travel guides	.02
Annual newsletter	.06
Rabbitkettle Program	.06
Local Communities programming	.20
Training for Info. Kiosks attendants	.04
Establish contacts with Bus Tour Co.	.01
Support GNWT & Business initiatives	.04
Maintain hiking routes	.06
Maintain trip planning info	.02
Total	**.63**

Non-recurring

Highway signage project	.02
Develop self-test mechanism	.04
Produce portable exhibit	.02
Day-use information project	.10
Find corporate sponsor, Virginia Falls	.04
Joint HWY info plan with GNWT	.04
Departure sale items	.02
Develop hiking routes	.06
Upgrade trip planning info.	.05
Total (.08/year for 5 years)	**.39**

Total annual O&M projects PY requirement:	**.71**
Estimated O&M for capital project management	**.16**
Overhead	**.16**

The conclusion is that there is now justification for allocating a full P.Y. to the park visitor activities program.

Capital Project Spreadsheet

1990/91

1. **Remote Weather Station**
   Concept Def.
2. **Portable Exhibit**
   Purchase Structure. 15.0
3. **IMAX Film**
   Assess and Plan
4. **Admin./VRC Centre Redevelopment**
   Planning

90/91 Sub Total 15.0

O&M Begin Year-round Personal Programming

1991/92

1. **Remote Weather Station**
   Prelim. Design.
2. **Portable Exhibits Design and complete**
3. **IMAX Film**
   Assess and Plan
4. **Admin./VRC Centre Redevelopment**
   Concept Design Stage
5. **Comprehensive Regional Signage**
   Concept PAD
6. **Park Signs** (Portage markers, Virginia Falls etc.)
   Design
7. **Upgrade Kiosks**
   Concept PAD
8. **Redevelop Park Publications Program**
   Concept PAD
9. **Regional Information Centres**
   Yellowknife 100.0

91/92 Sub Total 100.0

O&M Participation in Park Market Analysis

1992/93

1. **Remote Weather Station**
   Install 20.0
3. **IMAX Film**
   Continue as required
4. **Admin. Centre Redevelopment**
   Prelim. Design 15.0
5. **Regional Signage**
   Begin Implementation 10.0

(1992/93 continued)

6. **Park Signs** 14.0
7. **Upgrade Kiosks** Prelim. Design
8. **Redevelop Park Publications Program**
   Prelim. Design
9. **Regional Information Centres**
   Fort Simpson, Fort Liard 30.0
10. **Promotional Video and T.V. Commercials**
    Concept PAD
11. **PSA's** 5.0
12. **Poster Series**
    Concept PAD

92/93 Sub Total **94.0**

1993/94

4. **Admin./VRC Centre Redevelopment**
   Complete construction 150.0
5. **Regional Signage**
   Complete Production 25.0
7. **Upgrade Two Existing Kiosks**
   Construct 15.0
8. **Redevelop Park Publications Program**
   Begin Production 40.0
9. **Regional Information Centres**
   NWT-Alberta Border 15.0
10. **Promotional Video and T.V. Commercials**
    Prelim. Design
12. **Poster Series**
    Production 20.0
13. **Edu-Kit** 25.0

1993/94 Sub Total **290.0**

O&M Park Newsletter (possible capital project)

94/95 - Future Years

8. **Publications** 50.0
10. **Promotional Video and T.V. Commercials** 60.0
14. **Trail Development** 60.0

Sub Total **170.0**

Capital Grand Total 675.0

Recommendations to the Management Plan Review Team

The need to devise a management scenario for the mix of day-use, river tripping, associated camping, incidents of fly-in overnight camping and consequent air traffic is perhaps the single most significant visitor activity challenge which must be undertaken within the context of reviewing the management plan. An assessment must be made of the need for day-use quotas, group size limitations and regulation of arrival-departure scheduling of outfitters. Virginia Falls highlights the need for a management model for all aspects of river use which can be used for testing peak loading scenarios, scheduling and other parameters of use.

Air traffic over the park whether it be visitor transport charters or day-use flightseeing can have a strongly determining affect on the quality of a river-tripper's wilderness experience. The plan review team should propose a stronger strategy for working with Transport Canada to control air activities over the park.

All discussion of new visitor activity groups, their attendant service and marketing implications will be deferred for analysis by the management plan review team

Visitor data on day-users and highway travellers should be examined for adequacy and the need for further analysis of existing raw data on river trippers assessed.

The implications of the role of wardens as regional information sources particularly with regard to the Nahanni river beyond the park boundary should be assessed relative to training, the park information strategy etc.

The potential for day-use at Rabbitkettle Lake should be assessed.

The current park management plan does not provide for visitor activities staff at Nahanni. This service plan identifies numerous essential tasks which cannot be carried out without person-year resources dedicated to this function. The plan review should assess this need.